

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER

OF

STATE AID AND PENSIONS

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1927



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Commissioner of State Aid and Pensions,
State House, Boston, January 5, 1928.

To the Honorable Senate and the House of Representatives:

Complying with the requirements of Chapter 115, Section 2, General Laws, I have the honor to present to your honorable bodies the annual report of the Department of State Aid and Pensions, the part referring to State and Military Aid and Burials being for the year 1926, and that portion referring to pensions covering the year 1927.

Very respectfully,

RICHARD R. FLYNN,
Commissioner.

REPORT

State and Military Aid and Burial Expenses.

The expenditures on account of State and Military Aid to soldiers, sailors and marines of the Civil and Spanish Wars, the Philippine Insurrection, the Mexican Border Service and the War with Germany, and their dependents, and for the burials of soldiers, sailors and marines of the Civil and Spanish Wars, the Philippine Insurrection, Indian Campaigns, Mexican Border Service, and the War with Germany, and their wives, widows, and dependent fathers and mothers, and army nurses, by 311 cities and towns in the Commonwealth during the year 1926,—reimbursement being due and payable to the disbursing municipalities on or before November 10, 1927,—were as follows:

State Aid to soldiers and dependents, Civil War	\$184,408.00
State Aid to soldiers and dependents, War with Spain	13,848.50
State Aid to soldiers and dependents, Philippine Service	1,107.00
State Aid to soldiers and dependents, German War Service	5,313.00
Military Aid to soldiers and sailors, Civil War	1,974.50
Military Aid to soldiers and sailors, War with Spain	5,998.25
Military Aid to soldiers and sailors, Philippine Service	767.00
Military Aid to soldiers and sailors, Mexican Border Service	1,064.50
Military Aid to soldiers and sailors, German War Service	30,174.19
Burial expenses of soldiers and their dependents	4,597.18
Total for 1926	\$249,252.12

The decrease in the amount paid for State and Military Aid in Civil War cases was to be expected by reason of the decease of so many soldiers and widows of that war. More generous pension legislation by Congress has also helped to reduce the amount that the State would have been obliged to grant in State and Military Aid.

The excellent spirit of co-operation that has existed in the past between this Department and the Central Office of the U. S. Veterans' Bureau at Washington, D. C., and their regional office in Boston continues, and contributes to a better understanding of individual cases that come before our respective Departments for consideration, and also safeguards the interests of the nation and state from those who would abuse their generosity.

The medical authorities of the U. S. Naval Hospital in Chelsea and the U. S. Veterans' Hospitals in West Roxbury and Rutland, and also the Home

Service sections of the American Red Cross in the different Government hospitals in this State, have given us excellent support in the determination of Military Aid cases under their care.

STATE AID.

The total number of State Aid recipients, Civil War, for 1926, was 2965, classified as follows:—

Soldiers, 640; decrease, 196.

Wives, 12; decrease, 6.

Widows, 2294; decrease, 304.

Children, 19; decrease, 3.

Total, 2965.

Net decrease of recipients during 1926, 509.

Average cost to State per person aided, \$62.19+.

The total number of State Aid recipients, Spanish War, for 1926, was 232, classified as follows:—

Soldiers, 42; increase, 16.

Wives, 1; decrease, 1.

Widows, 162; increase, 3.

Mothers, 26; decrease, 2.

Army nurses, 1.

Total, 232.

Net increase of recipients during 1926, 16.

Average cost to State per person aided, \$59.69+.

The total number of State Aid recipients, Philippine Insurrection Service, for 1926, was 23, classified as follows:—

Soldiers, 9; increase, 3.

Widows, 12; increase, 1.

Mothers, 2.

Total, 23.

Net increase of recipients during 1926, 4.

Average cost to State per person aided, \$48.13+.

The total number of recipients of State Aid, War with Germany, for 1926, was 97, classified as follows:—

Soldiers, 8; increase, 4.

Wives, 1; increase, 1.

Widows, 46; increase, 1.

Mothers, 13; decrease, 3.

Fathers, 1.

Children, 26; increase, 1.

Army nurses, 2; increase, 1.

Total, 97.

Net increase of recipients during 1926, 5.

Average cost to State per person aided, \$54.77+.

MILITARY AID.

Military Aid to the amount of \$39,978.44, a decrease of \$13,779.61 from 1925, was disbursed as follows:—

Civil War soldiers, 23; decrease, 9.

Spanish War soldiers, 82; decrease, 9.

Philippine Insurrection soldiers, 12; decrease, 2.

Mexican Border Service soldiers, 11; increase, 4.

German War soldiers, 358; decrease, 123.

German War army nurses, 0; decrease, 2.

German War Yeoman F., 1.

CIVIL WAR:—Amount expended, classes 1 and 2	\$1,974.50
Average cost to State per person aided, \$85.84+.	
Amount expended, Classes 3 and 4, none.	
SPANISH WAR:—Amount expended, classes 1 and 2	\$5,918.25
Average cost to State per person aided, \$73.06+.	
Amount expended, Classes 3 and 4	\$80.00
Average cost to State per person aided, \$80.	
PHILIPPINE SERVICE:—Amount expended, classes 1 and 2	\$767.00
Average cost to State per person aided, \$63.91+.	
Amount expended, Classes 3 and 4, none.	
MEXICAN BORDER SERVICE:—Amount expended, classes 1 and 2	\$1,064.50
Average cost to State per person aided, \$96.77+.	
Amount expended, Classes 3 and 4, none.	
GERMAN WAR SERVICE:—Amount expended, classes 1 and 2	\$30,174.19
Average cost to State per person aided, \$84.05+.	
Amount expended, Classes 3 and 4, none.	
Total	\$39,978.44

Prior to the passage of Chapter 219, Acts of 1927, much difficulty was experienced in the adjudication of State and Military Aid cases in which the applicants based their claims on service in the Philippine Insurrection or China Relief Expedition by reason of the requirement of eligibility that the veterans must have actually served in these campaigns, which obliged this office to check their service records at the War Department, Washington, D. C., before passing on these claims. The above-designated chapter makes eligible any veteran who served during the period of the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Insurrection or the China Relief Expedition, whether or not he saw actual service in either of these campaigns. I deem it advisable to print the act for the guidance of municipal authorities.

[CHAP. 219.]

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE FURNISHING OF STATE OR MILITARY AID TO THOSE WHO SERVED DURING THE PERIOD OF THE SPANISH WAR, PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION OR CHINA RELIEF EXPEDITION.

Section six of chapter one hundred and fifteen of the General Laws, as amended by sections one and two of chapter two hundred and twenty-two of the acts of nineteen hundred and twenty-one, by chapter three hundred and fifty-seven of the acts of nineteen hundred and twenty-four and by chapter three hundred and one of the acts of nineteen hundred and twenty-six, is hereby further amended by inserting after the word "in" in the third line and after the word "in" the second time it occurs in the eighth line of the paragraph appearing in said chapter three hundred and one the words:—or during the period of,—so that said paragraph will read as follows:—Invalid pensioners of the United States who served in the army or navy of the United States to the credit of this commonwealth in or during the period of the war with Spain, having been appointed or having enlisted in such service after February fifteenth, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight and prior to July fourth, nineteen hundred and two; or who served in the regular army or navy of the United States during said war or in the army, navy or marine corps of the United States in or during the period of the Philippine Insurrection or the China Relief Expedition, having been appointed or having enlisted in such service between said dates while a citizen of this commonwealth, having a residence and actually residing therein.

Approved April 6, 1927.

Burial Expenses of Soldiers, Sailors and Marines, their Wives, Widows, Dependent Mothers and Fathers, and Army Nurses, under Sections 19 to 21, Chapter 115, General Laws, as amended by Chapters 262 and 266, Acts of 1924, and Chapter 155, Acts of 1926, and Chapter 226, Acts of 1927.

During the year 1926, 86 claims were approved at an expense to the Commonwealth of \$4,597.18, classified as follows:—

Civil War:—

Soldiers, 34; decrease, 13.
Wives, 0; decrease, 2.
Widows, 34; decrease, 13.
Mothers, 0; decrease, 2.
Total, 68.

Spanish War:—

Soldiers, 13; increase, 5.
Wives, 0.
Widows, 0; decrease, 1.
Mothers, 1.
Total, 14.

Philippine Insurrection:—

Soldiers, 2; decrease, 1.
Mothers, 0; decrease, 1.
Total, 2.

German War:—

Soldiers, 1; decrease, 6.
Total, 1.

Indian Campaigns:—

Soldiers, 1; increase, 1.

Net decrease during 1926, 33.

Average burial cost to State per person, \$53.45+.

The Burial Law was amended by Chapter 226, Acts of 1927, which increased the amount that may be granted by the State from \$60 to \$100, and also increased the maximum amount that may be expended for burial from \$100 to \$200. This act is printed below.

[CHAP. 226.]

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MAXIMUM CONTRIBUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH TOWARD THE EXPENSE OF THE FUNERALS OF CERTAIN VETERANS, AND THE MAXIMUM EXPENSE OF SUCH FUNERALS, TOWARD WHICH THE COMMONWEALTH WILL CONTRIBUTE.

Section twenty of chapter one hundred and fifteen of the General Laws, as amended by section sixty-eight of chapter three hundred and sixty-two of the acts of nineteen hundred and twenty-three and by chapter two hundred and sixty-six of the acts of nineteen hundred and twenty-four, is hereby further amended by striking out, in the second line, the word "sixty" and inserting in place thereof the words:—one hundred,—and by striking out, in the fifth line, the words "one hundred and sixty" and inserting in place thereof the words:—two hundred,—so as to read as follows:—*Section 20.* The expense of a burial as aforesaid shall not exceed one hundred dollars, two dollars of which shall be paid as compensation to the burial agent causing the interment to be made; but if the total expense of the burial, by whomsoever incurred, shall exceed two hundred dollars, no payment therefor shall be made by the commonwealth. The burial shall not be made in any cemetery or burial ground used exclusively for the burial of the pauper dead, or in any part of any cemetery or burial ground so used. Relatives of the deceased who are unable to bear the expense of burial may be allowed to conduct the

funeral. The full amount so expended, the name of the deceased soldier or sailor, the regiment, company, station, organization or vessel in which he served, the date of death, place of interment, and in case of a wife or widow the name of the husband and date of marriage, and such other details as the commissioner may require, shall be certified on oath to him, in such manner as he may approve, by the burial agent and the treasurer of the town expending the amount, within three months after the burial; and the commissioner shall endorse upon the certificate his allowance of such amounts as he finds have been paid, and reported according to the foregoing provisions, and shall transmit the certificate to the comptroller. The amounts legally paid and so allowed, with no expense for disbursement, shall be reimbursed by the commonwealth to the several towns on or before November tenth in the year after the expenditures have been made.

Approved April 7, 1927.

TOTAL PAYMENTS OF STATE AID

The total payments by the Commonwealth for State and Military Aid and burial of indigent soldiers and sailors, including appropriations made by the General Court toward maintenance and improvements of the Soldiers' Home in Massachusetts, and on account of special laws, from 1861 to the close of 1926, were		\$50,222,190.10
State and Military Aid and burial of soldiers and sailors on account of 1926, paid in 1927		249,252.12
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		\$50,471,442.22
Less refunds on account of payments of previous years		735.00
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		\$50,470,707.22
Special Laws, 1927
Soldiers' Home, 1927		219,570.56
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Total November 30, 1927		\$50,690,277.78

BOUNTIES AND GRATUITIES

Total payments of bounties on account of soldiers in the Civil War to date		\$17,872,859.82
Gratuities (Acts 1912, Ch. 702; Acts 1913, Chapters 105 and 443)		572,250.00
Gratuities (General Acts 1919, Chapters 283 and 342)	18,502,609.68	36,947,719.50
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Total November 30, 1927		\$87,637,997.28

SOLDIERS' RELIEF

The Soldiers' Relief law (see Chapter 115 of the General Laws, Sections 17 and 18) requires the Commissioner of State Aid and Pensions to investigate appeals from aggrieved veterans or their dependents when the relief requested has been refused them by the cities or towns of settlement, or the amount granted is inadequate for their support. No part of the Soldiers' Relief paid out by cities or towns is reimbursed by the State. The city or town of settlement bears the whole expense. We have received 298 appeals, and in compliance with the law caused prompt investigations to be made. After due consideration of the merits of each case, it appears that our decisions have been satisfactory to all concerned.

Chapter 308, Acts of 1927, amended the Soldiers' Relief law by further extending its provisions to include children over 16 years, and up to the age of 18 years when such children attend school or are incapacitated for work. Said chapter still further extended the provisions of the Soldiers' Relief law to include the widow and children of a World War veteran, if said veteran was an actual resident of this Commonwealth at the time of his decease but

had not gained a legal settlement in his own right, and further provided that his widow had acquired a legal settlement, and has not remarried.

For the information of municipal authorities this Act is printed below.

[CHAP. 308.]

AN ACT AUTHORIZING SOLDIERS' RELIEF FOR CERTAIN PERSONS.

Chapter one hundred and fifteen of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section seventeen and inserting in place thereof the following:

—Section 17. If a person who served in the army or navy of the United States in the war of the rebellion, in the army, navy or marine corps in the war with Spain or the Philippine insurrection between April twenty-first, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight, and July fourth, nineteen hundred and two, or in the army, navy or marine corps in the world war and received an honorable discharge from all enlistments therein, and who has a legal settlement in a town in the commonwealth, becomes from any cause, except his own criminal or wilful misconduct, poor and wholly or partly unable to provide maintenance for himself, his wife or minor children under sixteen years of age or for a dependent father or mother, or if such person dies leaving a widow or minor children under sixteen years of age, or minor children over sixteen but under eighteen years of age who attend school or are incapacitated for work, or a dependent father or mother without proper means of support, such support as may be necessary shall be accorded to him or his said dependents by the town where they or any of them have a legal settlement; but should such person have all the said qualifications except settlement, if he served in the war of the rebellion, or in the army, navy or marine corps in the war with Spain or the Philippine insurrection between said dates, his widow, who has acquired a legal settlement in her own right before August twelfth, nineteen hundred and sixteen, which settlement has not been defeated or lost, or if he served in the world war and at the time of his decease was a legal resident of this commonwealth, his widow, who has a legal settlement and who has not remarried, and his minor children under sixteen years of age, and those over sixteen but under eighteen years of age who attend school or are incapacitated for work, shall also be eligible to receive relief under this section. Such relief shall be furnished by the aldermen or selectmen, or, in Boston, by the soldiers' relief commissioner, subject, however, to the direction of the city council of said city as to the amount to be paid. The beneficiary shall receive said relief at home, or at such other place as the aldermen, selectmen or soldiers' relief commissioner deem proper, but he shall not be compelled to receive the same at an almshouse or public institution unless his physical or mental condition requires, or, if a minor, unless his parents or guardian so elect.

If an applicant for military aid or soldiers' relief has a settlement outside of the town where the application is made, the official required to act thereon shall, within three days, notify the corresponding official in the town of the applicant's settlement, and also the commissioner.

This section shall also apply to army nurses who served in the army hospitals of the United States during the civil war and are entitled to state aid under section six and to army nurses and their dependents as specified herein who served in the army, navy or marine corps during the war with Spain or during the Philippine insurrection between April twenty-first, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight, and July fourth, nineteen hundred and two, or during the world war.

Approved April 26, 1927.

PERSONNEL

Our office force and field investigators have worked faithfully and intelligently in the interest of veterans and their dependents. Our Agents made 7660 visits to applicants and beneficiaries, 6700 of which were house calls; 626 applicants were visited at various Government hospitals in the State; 298 Soldiers' Relief appeals were received from aggrieved parties, the majority of which required considerable investigation; 36 claims for pension

were executed at the homes of soldiers and widows who were physically unable to call at this office; and 155 Military Aid application blanks were executed in U. S. Veterans' Hospitals for veteran patients whose city or town of legal settlement was far removed from Boston, thereby expediting the applicants' claims as well as saving the municipalities concerned both time and expense of travel to complete these cases.

Colonel Frank P. Williams, Chief Surgeon of the Commonwealth, with his assistants, is continuing the same excellent service in safeguarding the Commonwealth that he has rendered in the past relative to physical examinations of veterans applying for Military Aid, or seeking admission to our State Soldiers' Home.

PENSION DEPARTMENT

The following is a statement in detail of the pension work of this office for the year ending December 31, 1927:—

Classification of Claims filed during the Year.

Soldiers (General Law), Original	27
Soldiers (General Law), Increase	14
Soldiers (Act May 1, 1920), Civil War, Increase	58
Soldiers (Act July 3, 1926), Civil War, Increase	19
Soldiers (Act March 4, 1917), Indian Wars	3
Soldiers (Act March 3, 1927), Indian Wars	59
Soldiers (Act May 1, 1926), Spanish War, Original	565
Soldiers (Act May 1, 1926), Spanish War, Increase	361
Nurses (Act May 1, 1926), Spanish War	2
Widows (General Law)	3
Widows (Act May 1, 1920), Civil War	107
Widows (Act July 3, 1926), Civil War	5
Widows (Act March 4, 1917), Indian Wars	2
Widows (Act March 3, 1927), Indian Wars	30
Widows (Act May 1, 1926), Spanish War	75
Widows (Accrued Pension)	4
Wives (Act March 3, 1899) One-half pension	6
Mothers	6
Fathers	2
Helpless children	1
Guardians	12
Reimbursement	60
Unendorsed checks	20
New pension certificate	2
Certificate in lieu of lost discharge	8
Arrears of pay	2
Total	1453
Number of claims allowed	987
Number of claims rejected	474
Amount collected	\$187,048.74

In addition to the above, we are often called upon to execute affidavits for persons who have filed pension claims through other attorneys, and to advise as to the method of procedure in order to complete the cases, all of which does not appear in the above summary, or in our office records. This department is maintained primarily for soldiers, sailors and their dependents having a residence in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A great many inquiries regarding United States pension laws are received from persons residing in other States, however, and prompt and careful attention is given every communication. We executed vouchers in cases where payment is made to the guardian or conservator, and also in cases in which the pension is divided between the soldier and his wife. These vouchers are executed on or after

the fourth of each month. A number of Civil war claims for increase of pension to \$90 per month have been received. In cases where the pensioner is in receipt of \$72 per month no formal application is required, but a request for the \$90 rate accompanied by medical evidence showing that the claimant is totally helpless must be forwarded to the Pension Bureau. In relation to the above, the words "totally helpless" mean inability to feed oneself, to sit up, put on or off a garment, or walk at all; in short, a bedridden or equally disabling condition. There is no expense to the claimants for prosecution of claims, blanks or postage.

ACT OF MARCH 3, 1927

The only pension legislation enacted by Congress during the last year was the increasing of pensions to survivors of the Indian Wars, their widows, and minor children under the Act of March 3, 1927.

The act of March 3, 1927, grants pension to any person who served thirty days or more in any military organization, whether such person was regularly mustered into the service of the United States or not, but whose service was under the authority or by the approval of the United States or any State or Territory in any Indian war or campaign, or in connection with, or in the zone of any Indian hostilities in any of the States or Territories of the United States from January 1, 1817, to December 31, 1898, inclusive, and who is suffering from any mental or physical disability or disabilities of a permanent character not the result of his own vicious habits, which so incapacitate him for the performance of manual labor as to render him unable to earn a support. Rates range from \$20 to \$50 per month proportionate to the degree of inability to earn a support, and pension commences from the date of filing of the application in the Bureau of Pensions, after the passage of this act, upon proof that the disability or disabilities then existed, and continues during the existence thereof.

Any person above referred to who has reached the age of sixty-two years shall, upon making proof of such fact, be placed upon the pension roll and entitled to receive a pension of \$20 per month; in case such person has reached the age of sixty-eight years, \$30 per month; in case such person has reached the age of seventy-two years, \$40 per month; and in case such person has reached the age of seventy-five years, \$50 per month.

I deem it advisable to print this law below.

AN ACT GRANTING PENSIONS TO CERTAIN SOLDIERS WHO SERVED IN THE INDIAN WARS FROM 1817 TO 1898, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That any person who served thirty days or more in any military organization, whether such person was regularly mustered into the service of the United States or not, but whose service was under the authority or by the approval of the United States or any State or Territory in any Indian war or campaign, or in connection with, or in the zone of any active Indian hostilities in any of the States or Territories of the United States from January 1, 1817, to December 31, 1898, inclusive, and who is now or who may hereafter be suffering from any mental or physical disability or disabilities of a permanent character, not the result of his own vicious habits, which so incapacitate him for the performance of manual labor as to render him unable to earn a support, shall, upon making due proof of the fact, according to such rules and regulations as the Secretary of the Interior may provide, be placed upon the pension roll of the United States and be entitled to receive pension not exceeding \$50 per month and not less than \$20 per month, proportionate to the degree of inability to earn a support; and in determining such inability each and every infirmity shall be duly considered and the aggregate of the disabilities shown shall be rated, and such pension shall commence from the date of filing of the application in the Bureau of Pensions, after the passage of this act, upon proof that the disability or disabilities then existed, and shall continue during the existence thereof: *Pro-*

vided, That any such person who has reached the age of sixty-two years shall, upon making proof of such fact, be placed upon the pension roll and entitled to receive a pension of \$20 per month; in case such person has reached the age of sixty-eight years, \$30 per month; in case such person has reached the age of seventy-two years, \$40 per month; and in case such person has reached the age of seventy-five years, \$50 per month.

SEC. 2. If any person who rendered service as described in section 1 of this act or who died in service irrespective of length of service, has since died, or shall hereafter die, leaving a widow, or minor children under the age of sixteen years, such widow shall, upon due proof of her husband's death, without proving his death to be the result of his military service, be placed on the pension roll from the date of filing the application therefor under this act, at the rate of \$30 per month during her widowhood, and shall also be paid \$6 per month for each child of such person under sixteen years of age, and in case there be no widow, or one not entitled to pension, and in the event of the death, remarriage, or forfeiture of title of the widow, the child or children under sixteen years of age of the soldier shall be paid such pension until the age of sixteen years, said pension, if there be no widow entitled, to commence from the date of filing application therefor after the passage of this act, and in the event of the death, remarriage, or forfeiture of title by the widow the pension to continue to the minor children from the date of such death, remarriage, or forfeiture of title: *Provided*, That in case a minor child is insane, idiotic, or otherwise permanently helpless, the pension shall continue during the life of said child, or during the period of such disability, and such pension shall commence from the date of filing application therefor after the passage of this act: *Provided further*, That said widow shall have married said soldier prior to March 4, 1917, and this section shall apply to a former widow of any soldier who rendered service as hereinbefore described, such widow having remarried either once or more after the death of the soldier, if it be shown that such subsequent or successive marriage has or have been dissolved, either by the death of the husband or husbands or by divorce without fault on the part of the wife. Such pension shall commence from date of filing application therefor in the Bureau of Pensions after the passage of this act, and any such former widow shall be entitled to and be paid a pension at the rate of \$30 a month, and any former widow mentioned in this section shall also be paid \$6 a month for each child of the soldier under sixteen years of age: *Provided further*, That in case of any widow whose name has been dropped from the pension roll because of her remarriage, if the pension has been granted to an insane, idiotic, or otherwise helpless child, or to a child or children under the age of sixteen years, she shall not be entitled to a renewal of pension under any act until the pension to such child or children terminates, unless such child or children be a member or members of her family and cared for by her, and upon renewal of pension to such widow payment of pension to such child or children shall cease.

SEC. 3. The period of service performed by beneficiaries under this act shall be determined, first, by reports from the records of the War Department, where there are such records; second, by reports from the records of the General Accounting Office showing payment by the United States, where there is no record of regular enlistment, or muster into the United States military service; and third, when there is no record of service or payment for same in the War Department or the General Accounting Office by satisfactory evidence from muster rolls on file in the several State or Territorial archives; fourth where no record of service has been made in the War Department or General Accounting Office and there is no muster roll or pay roll on file in the several State or Territorial archives showing service of the applicant, or where the same has been destroyed by fire or otherwise lost, or where there are muster rolls or pay rolls on file in the several State or Territorial archives but the applicant's name does not appear thereon, the applicant may make proof of service by furnishing evidence satisfactory to the Commissioner of Pensions: *Provided*, That the want of a certificate of discharge shall not deprive any applicant of the benefits of this act.

SEC. 4. From and after the fourth day of the next month after the approval of this act the rate of pension to surviving soldiers of the various Indian wars and campaigns who are now on the pension roll or who may hereafter be placed thereon under the acts of July 27, 1892, June 27, 1902, and May 30, 1908, as amended by the act of February 19, 1913, or under the act of March 4, 1917, shall be \$30 per month if sixty-eight years of age, \$40 per month if seventy-two years of age, and \$50 per month if seventy-five years of age, and that the rate of pension to the widows who are now on the pension roll or who may hereafter be placed thereon under the said acts shall be \$30 per month; *Provided, however,* That nothing in this act shall be so construed as to reduce any pension under any law, public or private, and that hereafter pensions granted under the acts referred to in this section shall commence from the date of filing of application therefor in the Bureau of Pensions.

SEC. 5. No claim agent, attorney, or other person shall contract for, demand, receive, or retain a fee for service in preparing, presenting, or prosecuting claims for the increase of pension provided for in this act; and no more than the sum of \$10 shall be allowed for such service in other claims thereunder, which sum shall be payable only on the order of the Commissioner of Pensions; and any person who shall, directly or indirectly, otherwise contract for, demand, receive, or retain a fee for service in preparing, presenting, or prosecuting any claim under this act, or shall wrongfully withhold from the pensioner or claimant the whole or any part of the pension allowed or due to such pensioner or claimant under this act, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall for each and every offense be fined not exceeding \$500 or be imprisoned not exceeding one year, or both, in the discretion of the court.

Approved, March 3, 1927.

The thanks of this department are again due Hon. Winfield Scott, United States Commissioner of Pensions, and his entire office staff for promptness in replying to inquiries and for the many courtesies extended in the prosecution of pension claims.